

Student Essay on Color and Light in "The Great Gatsby"

Color and Light in "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Essay

F. Scott Fitzgerald used color and light to express the feelings that the characters had. In the beginning the rich characters were wearing and surrounded by white. The poorer areas are in the valley of ashes giving the area a portrayal of grime and nothingness, "a valley of ashes - a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens." (32). Jay Gatsby's house is always lit up as well. Nick speaks about seeing all the cars and the carnivalesque lights before he even meets Gatsby. Daisy wears white as well. Her name also is taken from a white flower. Daisies are also very youthful and immature.

As the book goes on things begin to get tarnished and this is reflected in the colors and lights that Fitzgerald uses. "Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans." (115). Daisy and Jordan are shown as very rich and important like idols. The two women are still shown as objects of admiration. The cars that are driven reflect the change that has happened. Myrtle was run down by a light green car. Green was the symbol for hope. When this happens the hope is completely lost.

The demise of Gatsby is also shown by color. First, his lavish parties end and his house is literally and figuratively darkened. He no longer looks towards the green light, since hope was lost. He still reaches out however. The day that Gatsby was shot by Wilson he was swimming in the pool. It was nearly fall and there were yellow leaves surrounding him. The yellow leaves fell and they were dead, just like Gatsby.

Throughout *The Great Gatsby* color and light is used to portray money and feelings. The riches are white, like Jordan and Daisy. The green light enters as hope and exits as murder. The rise and fall of Jay Gatsby was shown by the leaves surrounding him in the pool.